

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for verifying correspondence between one or more check payment documents and a bank statement document verification, comprising the steps of:

obtaining account number information from a check document;

obtaining account number information from a bank statement document;

comparing the account number information from ~~[[said]]~~ the check document to the account number information from ~~[[a]]~~ the bank statement document to verify correspondence between the check document and the bank statement document a match; and

associating the check document with the bank statement document upon verifying correspondence between the check document and the bank statement document a match.

2. (Currently amended) A method for returned check payment verification, comprising the steps of:

capturing an image of at least a portion of each of a plurality of check documents in a set of check documents;

determining account number information from ~~[[said]]~~ the image for each of the plurality of check documents;

comparing the account number information of at least one ~~[[said]]~~ of the plurality of check documents to the account number information of at least one other check document in ~~[[said]]~~ the set of check documents to determine a match between the compared account number information.

3. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of obtaining account number information from a check document ~~further~~ comprises the step of ~~[[:]]~~ capturing an image of at least a portion of ~~[[said]]~~ the check document; and wherein the step of obtaining account number information from a bank statement document comprises the step of capturing an image of at least a portion of the bank statement document.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the method is employed during a mail insertion operation.

6. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
monitoring the position of ~~[[said]]~~ the bank statement document; and
regulating merger of ~~[[said]]~~ the one or more check documents with ~~[[said]]~~ the bank statement document.

7. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 6, further comprising the step of:
identifying account number information mismatches between the one or more check documents and ~~[[said]]~~ the bank statement document.

8. (Currently amended) The method of Claim ~~[[8]]~~ 7, further comprising the step of:

halting ~~said set~~ merger of the one or more check documents containing ~~[[said]]~~ an identified mismatched check document.

9. (Currently amended) The method of Claim ~~[[9]]~~ 7, further comprising the step of:
signaling an operator when a mismatched check document is identified.

10. (Currently amended) The method of Claim ~~[[9]]~~ 7, further comprising the step of:
diverting ~~said set of~~ the one or more check documents containing ~~[[said]]~~ an identified mismatched check document.

11. (Currently amended) The method of Claim ~~[[12]]~~ 7, further comprising the step of:
diverting said bank statement document ~~containing said~~ when a mismatched check document is identified.

12. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 7, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ a mismatched check document is marked as a mismatched error document.

13. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the account number information on both the check document and the bank statement document is a character string comprising a plurality of characters.

14. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the account number information on the check document and the bank statement document is matched using mismatch tolerance levels.

15. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 2, ~~wherein said check set~~ further comprising the step of comparing account number information from at least one of the check documents in the set of check documents with account number information from at least one check document in at least one other set of check documents to determine a match between compared account number information is matched with at least one second set of check documents, wherein each set contains account number information for related accounts.

16. (Currently amended) A method for check verification comprising the steps of:
passing a check document set through a check feeder device, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the set comprises at least one check document;

imaging each check document in ~~[[said]]~~ the set via an imaging device to create an image of each check document in the set;

determining account number information for each check document from each ~~[[said]]~~ image;

determining account number information for a bank statement document;

comparing ~~[[said]]~~ the account number information from each check document in ~~[[said]]~~ the set to account number information on ~~[[a]]~~ the bank statement document to verify correspondence between each check document in the set and the bank statement document.

17. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 16, ~~further comprising wherein the step~~ of determining account number information for a bank statement document comprises:

loading a bank statement document onto an automatic inserter machine; and

imaging ~~[[said]]~~ the bank document via a second imaging device. ~~[[;]]~~

~~determining account number information for said document;~~

18. (Currently amended) A device for check ~~payment~~ verification, comprising:

an imaging device, wherein ~~said check document~~ the imaging device images at least a portion of each check document in a set of check documents; and

a computer system, ~~[[said]]~~ the computer in communication with ~~[[said]]~~ the imaging device, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system reads at least a portion of ~~[[said]]~~ the image of each ~~[[said]]~~ check document for account number information and compares the account number information of each check document in ~~[[said]]~~ the set to account number information from every other check document in ~~[[said]]~~ the set to verify correspondence between each check document in the set.

19. (Currently amended) A device for check ~~payment~~ verification, comprising:

a first imaging device, wherein the first imaging device images at least a portion of a bank statement document to determine account number information on the bank statement document;

~~[[an]]~~ a second imaging device, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the second imaging device images at least a portion of each check document in a set of check documents to determine account number information on each check document; and

a computer system, ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system in communication with ~~[[said]]~~ the first imaging device and the second imaging device, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system ~~reads at least a portion of said image of each said check document for account number information and~~ compares the account number information of each check document ~~in said set to~~ the account number information from ~~[[a]]~~ the bank statement document to determine a match between the compared account number information.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim ~~[[20]]~~ 19, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the second imaging device comprises:

a light source, ~~[[said]]~~ the light source illuminating ~~[[said]]~~ each check document;

a camera, ~~[[said]]~~ the camera positioned to obtain an image of at least a portion of ~~[[said]]~~ each check document;

a trigger device, the ~~[[; said]]~~ trigger device sensing ~~[[said]]~~ each check document and activating ~~[[said]]~~ the camera to obtain an image of ~~[[said]]~~ each check document as each check document is sensed by the trigger device.

22. (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the trigger device comprises:

a trigger sensor, positioned to sense the presence of ~~[[a]]~~ each check document;

a trigger mechanism operatively connected to [[said]] the second imaging device for activating [[said]] the second imaging device; and

a trigger amplifier, operatively connecting [[said]] the trigger sensor and [[said]] the trigger mechanism.

23. (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein [[said]] the second imaging device is a digital, region of interest camera.

24. (Currently amended) A check verification system comprising:

an automated in-line mailing device (AIM), having a bank statement document imaging device positioned to image bank statement documents traveling along an AIM conveyor;

a check feeder, having a check document imaging device positioned to image check documents merging with said AIM conveyor;

a computer system for processing images obtained from the bank statement document imaging device and the check document imaging device for comparison of account number information[[:]] to verify correspondence between bank statement documents and check documents.

25. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 24, further comprising:

a document control system, [[said]] the document control system in communication with [[said]] the computer system, wherein [[said]] the document control system operates with [[said]] the computer system to regulate [[said]] the check documents and [[said]] the bank ~~statements~~ statement documents during a mail insertion operation.

26. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 24, further comprising:

a control panel, ~~[[said]]~~ the control panel in communication with ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system.

27. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 25, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the check feeder ~~device~~ further comprises:

a drive assembly for controlling the rate of check documents ~~checks~~ passing through the check feeder.

28. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the check feeder is halted when a mismatch between ~~[[said]]~~ account number information on a bank statement document and ~~[[said]]~~ a check document is detected by ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system.

29. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the check feeder marks mismatched check documents for diverting.

30. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the check feeder diverts mismatched check documents.

31. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the AIM diverts mismatched check documents ~~checks~~ and bank statement documents.

32. (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 19, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the account number information on the check documents and on the bank statement documents ~~comprise~~ comprises a character string of numbers.

33. ~~[[34.]]~~ (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system matches check document sets which contain related bank account numbers to ~~[[said]]~~ the bank statement document.

34. ~~[[35.]]~~ (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the computer system matches ~~[[said]]~~ the check documents to ~~[[said]]~~ the bank statement document ~~documents~~ using selectable mismatch tolerance levels.

35. ~~[[36.]]~~ (Currently amended) A device for check ~~payment~~ verification, comprising:
at least one imaging device ~~[[means]]~~ for determining account number information from each check in a set of check documents;
at least one imaging device ~~[[means]]~~ for determining account number information from a bank statement; and
a processor ~~[[means]]~~ for determining whether ~~[[said]]~~ the check document account number information matches ~~[[said]]~~ the bank statement account number information.

36. (New) The system of Claim 31, wherein the AIM marks envelopes having mismatched check documents and bank statement documents.